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The Tudor Facsimile Texts

A Knack to Know a Knave.

Date of the first known edition, ... 1594.

(*Dyce Collection at S. Kensington.*)

Reproduced in Facsimile, 1911.

The Tudor Facsimile Texts

Under the Supervision and Editorship of

JOHN S. FARMER

A Knack to Know a Knave.

1594

Issued for Subscribers by the Editor of

THE TUDOR FACSIMILE TEXTS

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A.258927

A Knack to Know a Knave.

1594.

This play is reproduced from an original now in the Dyce Collection at South Kensington. The British Museum example is a much poorer copy. Indeed, play for play, the Dyce books are usually far and away superior in every way as compared with B.M. copies. For this reason, though the cost of reproduction is considerably enhanced thereby, and also in spite of the fact that there is no proper studio at South Kensington, as at the Museum, Mr. Fleming at my request rightly chooses the Dyce Bequest copies. There is another example in the Bodleian at Oxford.

The "Knack to Know a Knave" was probably written in 1592.

Comparing this facsimile with the original, there is nothing that calls for special remark; the reproduction is generally and uniformly good.

JOHN S. FARMER.

A moſt pleaſant and merie nevv Comedie,

Intituled,

A Knacke to knowe a Knaue.

Newlie ſet foorth, as it hath ſundrie tymes bene played by ED. ALLEN and his Companie.

VVith KEMPS applauded Merrimentes of the men of Gotcham, in receiuing the King into Gotcham.

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND ART 1869 DYCE BEQUEST

Imprinted at London by Richard Iones, dwelling at the ſigne of the Roſe and Crowne, nere Holborne bridge. 1594.

A merie Knacke to knowe a Knaue,

Enter King Edgar, biſhop Dunſton, and Perin a courtier.

King. DVnſton, how highlie are we bound to praiſe
The Eternall God that ſtill prouides for vs,
And giues vs leaue to rule in this our land,
Lyke wiſe Vaſpaſian, Romes rich Emperour:
Suppreſſing ſinne, that daylie raignes in vs:
Firſt, murther we rewarde with preſent death,
And thoſe that doe commit fellonious crimes,
Our lawes of England doe awarde them death:
And hee that doeth diſpoyle a Virgins chaſtitie,
Muſt lykewiſe ſuffer death by lawes decree,
And that decree is irreuocable.
Then as I am Gods Vicegerent heer on earth,
By Gods appointment heere to raigne and rule,
So muſt I ſeeke to cut abuſes downe,
That lyke to Hydras heades, daylie growes vp one in ano-
And therein makes the land infectious. (thers place,
Which if with good regard we looke not to,
We ſhall, lyke Sodom, feele that fierie doome,
That God in Juſtice did inflict on them.

Dunſton. Your Grates care herein I much commend,
And England hath iuſt cauſe to praiſe the Lorde,
That ſent ſo good a King to gouerne them,
Your lyfe may be a Lanterne to the ſtate,
By perfect ſigne of humilitie.
Howe bleſt had Sodome bene in ſight of God,
If they had had ſo kinde a Gouernour,
They had then vndoubtedlie eſcapt that doome,

That God in iuſtice did inflict on them:
Then England kneele vpon thy hartie knee,
And praiſe that God, that ſo prouides for thee.
And vertuous Prince, thou Salomon of our age,
Whoſe yeares I hope ſhall double Neſtors raigne,
And bring a thouſand profits to the land:
My ſelfe (dread Prince) in token of my loue,
And dutifull obedience to your Grace,
Will ſtudie daylie, as my dutie willes,
To roote ſinnes from the flouriſhing common wealth.
That Fame in euery angle of the world,
May ſound due praiſe of Englands vertuous King.
King. Dunſton, liue thou, and counſell ſtill the king,
To maintaine Iuſtice, were it on himſelf,
Rather than ſoothing him in his abuſe,
To ſee ſubuerſion of his common wealth.
I tell thee Dunſton, thou haſt pleaſed the King,
And prooued thy ſelfe a vertuous counſellour:
Thy counſell is to me as North ſtars light,
That guides the Sayler to his wiſhed port:
For by that ſtarre he is ſo comforted,
That he ſailes daungerleſſe on daungerous ſeas,
And in his deepeſt ſadnes comforts him:
So Dunſtons knowledge is that ſtarre of ioy,
That will with helpe conduct me to my happineſſe.
Honeſty. And yet thou art not happy Edgar,
Becauſe that ſinnes, lyke ſwarmes, remaine in thee.
King. Why, tis impoſſible, for I haue ſtudied ſtill,
To root abuſes from the common wealth,
That may infect the king or communaltie.
Therefore, baſe Peaſant, wilfull as thou art,
I tell thee troth, thou haſt diſpleaſd the King.
Honeſty. May, the King hath diſpleaſed himſelfe,
In truſting euery one that ſpeaks him faire:
For through faire words, Kings manie tymes are faine
To countenance Knaues by their authoritie:

I will

I will not ſay your Grace doeth ſo.

Perin. No ſir, you were not beſt.

Honeſt. Why, if I ſhould, I might make good my word,
And fynd a Knaue, I feare, before I part.

King. Why, what art thou?

Honeſty. Mary I goe plaine, and my name is Honeſty,
A friend to your Grace, but a foe to Flatterers,
And one that hath a Knacke to know a Knaue. (giuen you,

Perin. As how ſir, by art, or by ſome foolish gift God hath
You are ſome Viſitian, or ſkild in Viſognomy, or in palmeſtry
For I am ſure, you can neuer do it by Aſtronomie,
Becauſe there are no ſtarres to knowe a knaue. (coſt,

Hon. True, but many an honeſt man knowes a knaue to his
And is neither Viſitia, Viſognomer, palmeſter, nor aſtronomer
But a plaine man of the country, lyke me,
That knowes a knaue, if he doe but ſee his cap.

Per. That wer prætie I faith, to ſee Honeſty know a knaue
Tis more than I can do with al the ſkil I haue: (by his cap,
But tel me I pray thee, how I ſhould know a knaue.

Hon. I beleeue you wel, for offenders neuer bewray their
Til the Law fynd them, and punish them: (offences
But you would faine tell how to know a knaue,
Then thus, the firſt man you meet in the morning,
If he ſalute you, draw neere him,
And ſmell to his hat, and after ſmell to your owne,
And my cap to a noble, if his ſmel lyke yours, he is a knaue,
I thinke I ſpoke with you now.

Perin. Baſe Villain, were it not that the Kinges preſence
doth priuilege thy preſumptiō, I wold teach you to ieſt with your
Ki. Forbear, honeſty, thou art a good plain fellow, (fellows
And I cōmend thy wit, that haſt ſuch waies to know a knaue.

Hon. Honeſty is plaine my Lord, but no good fellow,
For good fellowes be purſe-takers now a daies:
And there be ſo manie of ſuch good fellowes,
That Honeſty may walke the ſtrectes without company,
Not that there wants company, but honeſt company I mean,
And yet Honeſty, can clap a knaue on the ſhoulder for al his
brauerie.

Perin, Why(baſe companion)meane you me?
Honeſty. Not baſe(ſir) becauſe I was truelie begotten,
For Honeſty may be ſuſpected,but neuer detected:
But you think I had a bayliefe to my father as you had,
And that my mother could returne a writ of erroꝛ,
As yours did,when ſuch a Gallant as you were gotten.
King. Beleeue me,Perin, he hath touchd you now,
And I perceiue,though Honeſty be ſimple,
Yet manie tymes he ſpeakes trueth. (not lie:
Honeſty. True,if it pleaſe your Grace,for honeſt men will
But if your Grace vouchſafe to giue me leaue,
You ſhall ſee me finde moꝛe knaues than one.
If my cunning faile me not,oꝛ els ſay Honeſty had no honeſty
Ki. But tel me,Dunſton,how thinkeſt thou of this motion?
Were it not good thinkeſt thou we gaue him leaue
To ſtifle ſuch Catterpillers as coꝛrupt the common welth:
For manie tymes ſuch ſimple men as he,
Bewꝛay much matter in ſimplicitie:
Then tell me Dunſton,what thinkeſt thou of his motion?
Dunſt. If it pleaſe your Grace to thinke it good,
Dunſton will ſay as once Heſeſtion did,
When Alexander wan rich Macedone,
That what ſo ere the King himſelfe thought meete,
He would in dutifull obedience yeeld vnto:
And ſo ſaith Dunſton to your Maieſtie.
For many times ſuch ſimple men bring that to paſſe,
That wiſer heads cannot attaine vnto,
For doubtleſſe he hath ſome deuice in hand,
Whereby to finde ſuch ſubtle knauerie.
King. Well,Dunſton,then as thou haſt counſeld me,
I will for once make proofe of Honeſty:ſirra,come hither,
In hope you will, as your profeſſion is,
In honeſt ſoꝛt to finde deceiuers out:
And finding them,to giue vs notice ſtraight,
That we may punish them for their amiſſe:
We giue thee leaue to worke what means thou maiſt,

So

So it be not preiudice to the ſtate nor vs.
Honeſty. My gratious Lord, if Honeſtie offend,
In anie thing that he hath promiſed,
And doe not as your Grace hath giuen in charge,
Stille ſuch Caterpillers as corrupt the ſtate.
Let Honeſtie receiue ſuch puniſhment,
As he deſerues that leaſes to the king. (thee firſt,
King. Honeſty it is ynough, but tel me now what moued
To vndertake this taſke to viſit vs, ſpeak truth, diſemble not:
Honeſt. If I ſhuld tel your Grace twold make you laugh
To heare how Honeſty was entertainde,
Poore, lame and blinde when I came once athore,
Lord, how they came in flocks to viſit me,
The ſhepheard with his hooke, and Thraſher with his flaile,
The very pedler with his dog, and the tinker with his male.
Then comes a ſouldier counterfeit, & with him was his Jug,
And Wil the whipper of the dogs had got a bounſing trug:
And coging Dick was in the crue, that ſwore he cam frō Frāce
He ſwore that in the Kings defence, he loſt his arm by chance,
And yet in conſcience, if I were put to ſweare,
I would be bound to lay a pound, the knaue was neuer there,
And hapning mongſt this companie by chance one day,
I had no ſooner namde my name, but they ran all away,
But now I will to my taſke, and leaue your Grace,
And ſo I take my conge of your Maieſtie.
King. Honeſtie, farewel, and looke vnto your charge.
Perin. My gratious Lord, if I might not offend,
I would intreat a fauour at your hand,
Tis ſo, I heard of late, my gratious Lord,
That my kinde father lay at poynt of death,
And if (my Lord) I ſhould not viſite him,
The world (I feare) would fynd great fault with me.
King. May, Perin, if your buſineſſe bee of waight,
We are content to giue you leaue to goe:
Prouided this, that you returne againe,
When you haue ſeene your Father and your friends.

Perin. My gratious Lord, I will not ſtay there long,
Only but ſee my father and returne againe.
Till when my gratious Lord, I take my leaue.
King. Perin farewel, and tel me Dunſton, now we are alone,
What doeſt thou thinke of beauteous Alfrida,
For ſhe is reported to be be paſſing faire:
They ſay ſhe hath a white pit in hir chin,
That makes her looke lyke to the Queene of loue,
When ſhe was dalying with Endymion:
Beleeue me Dunſton, if ſhe be ſo faire,
She will ſerue our turne to make a Concubine,
Me thinks tis good ſome tyme to haue a loue
To ſport withall, and paſſe away the tyme.
Dun. I, my good Lord, Dunſton could wel allow of it,
If ſo your Grace would marrie Alfrida.
King. What, wouldſt thou haue me marie her I neuer ſaw
Then men would ſay I doted on a wench:
But Dunſton, I haue found a policie,
Which muſt indeed be followed to the full:

Enter Ethenwald.

Earle Ethenwald, welcome, I thought to ſend for you,
You muſt goe doe a meſſage for vs now,
Tis nothing but to woo a Wench, which you can doe:
You muſt not woo her for your ſelfe but me,
Tell her, I ſit and pine lyke Tantalus:
And if you can, ſtraine forth a teare for me,
Tell her, ſhe ſhall be honoured in my Loue,
And beare a childe that one day may be King:
Bid her not ſtand on tearmes, but ſend me word,
Whether ſhe be reſolued to loue me, yea or no.
If ſhe ſay no, tell her I can enforce her Loue:
Or tis no matter though you leaue that out,
And tell her this, we heare ſhe is as wyſe,
As eloquent and ful of Oratory, as Thaly was, daughter of (Iupiter
Whoſe ſpeaches were ſo pleaſing mong the Greeks
That ſhe was tearmde a ſecond Socrates.

For

For ſome report, women loue to be praiſed,
Then in my cauſe I pray thee loue thou Alfrida.
Ethen. My gratious Lord, and Ethenwald ſhall not faile
To ſhew his humble dutie to your Maieſtie:
I will, my Lord, woe her in your behalfe,
Plead loue for you, and ſtraine a ſigh to ſhow your paſſions,
I will ſay ſhe is fayrer than the Dolphins eie,
At whome amazde, the night ſtars ſtand and gaze,
Then will I praiſe her chin, and checke, and pretty hand,
Long made lyke Venus, when ſhe vſde the harp,
When Mars was reueling in loues high houſe.
Beſides, my Lord, I will ſay ſhe hath a pace,
Much like to Iuno in Idea vale,
When Argus watcht the Heifer on the mount:
Theſe words, my Lord, will make her loue, I am ſure,
If theſe will not my Lord, I haue better far.
King. May, this is well, now Ethenwald be gone,
For I ſhall long to heare of thy returne.
Eth. My gratious Lord, I humbly take my leaue. Exit.
King. Ethenwald farewel: Dunſton, how likeſt thou this?
What, haue I done well in ſending Ethenwald:
But in good tyme, how if he lyke the, maybe,
Beleeue me Dunſton, then my game is mard.
Dunſt. I doe not thinke, my gratious Lord,
My Nephew Ethenwald beares that bad mind,
For hetherto he hath bene tearmed iuſt,
And kept your Grace his gratious fauourer.
Ki. True Dunſton, yet haue I read that Loue
Hath made the ſonne deceiue the father oft:
But Dunſton, leauing this, come lets to court.
Dunſton. I will attend vpon your Maieſty, Exeunt.
Enter Bayliefe of Hexam, and his foure ſonnes, to wit, a Courtier, a Prieſt, a Conicatcher, and a Farmer.
Bayly. My ſonnes you ſee how age decaies my ſtate,
And that my lyfe lyke ſnow before the ſun:

Gins to diſſolue into that ſubſtance nowe,
From whoſe incloſure grew my fyre of lyfe,
The earth I meane, ſweet mother of vs all,
Whom death authoriſed by heauens high power,
Shall bring at laſt, from whence at firſt I came,
Yet ere I yeeld my ſelfe to death, my ſonnes,
Giue eare, and heare what rules I ſet you downe,
And firſt to thee my ſonne, that liueſt by wit,
I know thou haſt ſo many honeſt ſleights,
To ſhift and coſen ſmoothly on thy wit,
To cog and lie, and braue it with the beſt,
That twere but labour loſt to counſell thee,
And therfore to the next, Walter, that ſeemes in ſhew a husband-man:
My ſonne, when that thy maiſter truſts thee moſt,
And thinks thou dealeſt as truelie as himſelfe,
Be thou the firſt to worke deceit to him:
So by that meanes thou maiſt inrich thy ſelfe,
And liue at pleaſure when thy maiſter's dead:
And when to market thou art ſent with woll,
Put ſand amongſt it, and twill make it weigh,
The waight twiſe double that it did before,
The ouerplus is thine into thy purſe.
But now my ſonne, that keeps the Court,
Be thou a means to ſet the Peeres at ſtrife,
And currikauour for the commons loue.
If any but in conference name the King.
Informe his Maieſtie they enuie him.
And if the king but moue or ſpeake to thee,
Kneele on both knees, and ſay, God ſaue your Maieſtie.
If any man be fauoured by the King,
Speake thou him faire, although in heart thou enuie him.
But who is next?

Prieſt. That am I father, that vſe the word of God,
And liue only by the heauenly Manna.

Bayl. Who? the Prieſt, Giue eare my ſonne,
I haue a leſſon yet in ſtore for thee:
Thou muſt (my ſon) make ſhew of holineſſe,

And

And blinde the woꝛld with thy hipocriſie:
And ſometime giue a pennie to the pooꝛe,
But let it be in the Church oꝛ market place,
That men may pꝛaiſe thy liberalitie.
Speak againſt vſurie, yet forſake no pawnes,
So thou maiſt gaine thꝛee ſhillings in the pound:
Warne thou the woꝛld from ſin and vile exceſſe,
And now and then ſpeak againſt dꝛunkennes,
So by this meanes thou ſhall be tearmed wiſe,
And with thy pꝛenes blind the peoples eies.
But now (my ſonnes) diſcourſe to me in bꝛiefe,
How you haue liued, and how you meane to die.

Conicatcher. Then (father) thus liue I that vſe my wit,
Unto my ſelfe I loue ſtill to be wiſe,
Foꝛ when I am dꝛiuen to ſhift foꝛ meat oꝛ coine,
Oꝛ gay apparell to maintaine me bꝛaue,
Then doe I flaunt it out about the change,
As if I were ſome lauded Gentleman,
And falling in with ſome rich merchant there,
I take commodities foꝛ ſixe monthes day,
The bill being made, I muſt ſet to my hand,
Then if I pay not, they may burne the band.

Farm. Then father, hark how I haue pꝛofited,
Walter your ſon that keeps the countrie,
I haue raiſed the markets, and oppꝛeſt the pooꝛe,
And made a thouſand goe from dooꝛ to dooꝛe:
And why did I (think you) vſe this extremitie,
Becauſe I would haue coꝛne enough to feed the enemie,
Father, you know we haue but a while to liue,
Then while we liue, let each man ſhift foꝛ one:
Foꝛ he that can not make ſhift in the woꝛld,
They ſay hees vnwoꝛthy to liue in it.
And he that liues muſt ſtill increaſe his ſtoꝛe,
Foꝛ he that hath moſt wealth of all deſireth moꝛe.

Perin. Bꝛethꝛen you haue ſpoken wel, I muſt needs ſay,
But now giue eare to me, to me that keeps the court.

Father, I liue as Anſtipus did, & vſe my wits to flatter with
If any in priuate conference name the king, (the king.
I ſtraight informe his Grace they enuie him:
Did Sinon liue with all his ſubtiltie:
He could not tell a flattering tale more cunninglie:
Some tyme I moue the King to be effeminate,
And ſpend his tyme with ſome coy Curtizan:
Thus with the King I currie fauour ſtill,
Though with my heart I wiſh him any ill:
And ſometime I can counterfeit his hand and ſeale,
And borrow money of the communalty:
And thus I liue and flaunt it with the beſt,
And dice and carde inferiour vnto none:
And none dares ſpeake againſt me in the court,
Becauſe they know the King doth fauour me.

Prieſt. And I among my brethren and my friends
Doe ſtill inſtruct them with my doctrine,
And Yea and nay goes through the world with vs.
Fie, not an oath we ſweare for twentie pound,
Brethren (ſay we) take heed by Adams fal,
For by his ſinnes we are condemned all.
Thus preach we ſtill vnto our brethren,
Though in our heart we neuer meane the thing:
Thus doe we blind the world with holineſſe,
And ſo by that are tearmed pure Preciſians.

Bayl. Full well and wiſely haue you ſaid my ſonnes,
And I commend you for your forwards mindes:
That in your liues bewray whoſe ſonnes ye are:
Here haue I bene a Bayliefe three ſcore yeares,
And vſde exaction on the dwellers by,
For if a man were brought before my face,
For colenage, theft, or liuing on his wit,
For counterfeiting any hand or ſeale,
The matter heard, the witneſſe brought to me,
I tooke a bribe, and let the priſoners free:
So by ſuch dealings I haue got the wealth

Which I would haue diſburſt among you al,
With this prouiſo, that you all ſhall liue,
And lead ſuch liues as I haue ſet you downe,
Carue to your ſelues, and care not what they ſay,
That bid you feare the fearfull Iudgment day.
Liue to your ſelues while you haue tyme to liue,
Get what you can, but ſee ye nothing giue:
But hearke my ſonnes, me thinks I heare a noyſe,
And gaſtlie viſions makes me timerous,
Ah ſee my ſonnes, where death, pall Death appeares,
To ſummon me before a fearfull Iudge:
Me thinks reuenge ſtands with an yron whip,
And cries repent, or I will puniſh thee:
My heart is hardened, I cannot repent.
Ah hark, me thinkes the Iudge doth giue my doome,
And I am damned to euer burning fyre:
Soule, be thou ſafe, and bodie flie to hell. He dyeth,

Enter Deuil, and carie him away.

Conic. Brother, why do you not read to my father?

Prieſt. Trulie my booke of exhortation is at my place of Exerciſe, and without it I can doe nothing: Gods peace bee with him. Exeunt.

Enter the King, Philarchus, his father, Dunſton, and Attendants.

King. Father ſay on, for now my leiſure ſerues,
And Edgar giues thee leaue to tell thy minde,
For I perceiue thine eies are full of teares,
Which ſhowes that manie inward paſſions troubles thee.
If anie here haue wronged thine aged yeares,
In keeping that from thee that is thy due,
Name but the man, and as I am Englands King,
Thou ſhalt haue all the fauour I can ſhew.

Father. Then vertuous Prince, myrrour of curteſie,
Whoſe Iudgements, and whoſe lawes for gouernment,
And puniſhing of euerie foule abuſe,
Is like the iudgement of great Alexander,

Third of that name, whom some tearmed the Seuere,
Or lyke Vaſpaſian, Romes vertuous gouernour,
Who for a blowe his ſonne did giue a Swaine,
Did ſtraight commaund that he ſhould looſe his hand.
Then vertuous Edgar, be Vaſpaſian once,
In giuing ſentence on a graceleſſe childe,
Know (vertuous Prince) that in my pride of yeares,
When luſtfull pleaſure prickt my wanton minde:
Euen in the April of my flouriſhing time,
I was betroth'd, and wedded to a wyfe,
By whome, too ſoone, I had that vnkind boy,
Whoſe diſobedience to his aged Syre,
The Lord wil plague with torments worſe than death,
This diſobedient child, nay baſe Arrauogant,
Whome I with care did nouriſh to this ſtate,
Puft with a pride, that vpſtart Courtiers vſe,
And ſeeing that I was brought to pouertie,
He did refuſe to know me for his Syre.
And when I challenged him by Natures lawes,
To yeeld obedience to his Fathers age,
He told me ſtraight, he took it in great ſcorne,
To be begot by one ſo baſe as I.
My age that ill could brook his ſharpe replie,
Did with this wand (my Lord) reach him a blow:
But he contrary lawes of God and men,
Did ſtrike me ſuch a blowe in vild diſdaine,
That with the ſtroke I fel to earth againe.

Kin. Vnkind Philarchus, how haſt thou miſbon
In wilful diſobedience to thy Syre?
Art thou growne proud becauſe I fauoured thee?
Why, I can quicklie make thee bare againe,
And then, I think, being in thy former ſtate,
Thou wilt remember who thy father was:
And gentle Sophocles, in good tyme I recount,
Thy antient ſaying, not ſo old as true,
For ſaith, he that hath many children.

Shall

Shall neuer be without ſome myrth,
Nor die without ſome ſorrowe, for if they
Be vertuous, he ſhall haue cauſe to reioyce,
But if vitious, ſtubburne, or diſobediente,
Euer to liue in continuall ſadneſſe. (ſolent,
I am ſorie (Philarchus) that my fauours haue made thee in-
Wel, I wil ſee now if my frownes wil make thee penitent.
Now Father, ſee how Nature gins to worke,
And how ſalt teares, lyke drops of peely dew
Fals from his eies, as ſorrowing his amiſſe.
Phil. Moſt gracious Prince, vouchſafe to heare me ſpeake,
I cannot but confeſſe (moſt gracious Soueraigne)
That I haue erd in being obſtinate in wilful diſobedience to
Wherin I haue wrongd nature and your Maieſty (my ſyre
But I am not the firſt whom ouerſight
Hath made forgetfull of a Fathers loue:
But Fathers loue ſhall neuer be forgot,
If he but daine to pardon my amiſſe:
But if your wrath will no waies be appeaſed,
Rip vp this breaſt, where is incloſde that heart,
That bleeds with griefe to thinke on my amiſſe.
Ah Father pardon, ſweet Father pardon me.
Fath. No (graceleſſe Impe, degenerate and vnkinde)
Thou art no ſonne of mine, but Tygers whelp,
That haſt bene foſtred by ſome Lyons pap,
But as the talleſt Aſh is cut down, becauſe it yeelds no fruit,
And an vnprofitable cow, yeelding no milke, is ſlaughtred,
And the idle Drone, gathering no honie, is contemned,
So vngrateful children, that will yeeld no naturall obedience,
Muſt be cut off, as vnfit to beare the name Chriſtians.
Whoſe lines digreſſe both from reaſon and humanitie,
But as thou haſt dealt vnnaturallie with me,
So I reſolue to pull my heart from thee,
Therefore dread Prince, vouchſafe to pitie me,
An grant I may haue Iuſtice on my ſonne.

King. Dunſton, how counſaileſt thou the King in this?
I promiſe thee I am ſorie for the Youth,
Becauſe in heart I euer wiſht him well.
Dunſt. My gratious Lord, if I might counſell you,
I would counſell you to iudge as he deſerues,
He that diſdaines his Father in his want,
And wilfullie will diſobey his Syre,
Deſerues (my Lord) by Gods and Natures lawes,
To be rewarded with extreameſt illes:
Then as your Grace hath ſtabliſht lawes for gouernment,
So 'et Offenders feele the penalties.
King. I Dunſton, now thou ſpeakeſt as fits a counſellor,
But not as friend to him whom Edgar loues:
Father, what wouldeſt thou haue me doe in this?
Thou ſeeſt thy ſonne is ſorry for his faule,
And I am ſure thou would not wiſh his death,
Becauſe a fathers care commands the contrarie,
Then (gentle Father) let me plead for him,
And be his pledge for ſhunning wilfull illes.
Fath. Will Edgar now be found a partiall Iudge,
In pleading pardon for a graceleſſe childe?
Is it not true, that one cole of fyre will burne many houſes?
And one ſmall ſtracke in fineſt cloath that is,
Will both diſgrace and blemiſh the whole peece:
So wilfull children, ſpotted with one ill,
Are apt to fall to twentie thouſand more.
And therefore (mightie Soueraigne) leaue to ſpeake,
And paſſe iuſt ſentence on Philarchus lyfe.
Philarch. My life (dear father) that ſentence wer too harſh,
Let me be baniſht from my countries bounds,
And liue as exilde in ſome wildernes,
Bard from ſocietie and ſight of men,
Or let me hazard fortune on the ſeas,
In ſetting me aboord ſome helmleſſe ſhip,
That either I may ſplit vpon ſome rocke,
Or els be ſwallowed in the purple Maine,

Rather

Rather than die in preſence of my King,
Or bring that ſorrow to your aged yeares:
If this ſuffice not, then let me be armde,
And left alone among ten thouſand foes,
And if my weapon cannot ſet me free,
Let them be means to take my lyfe from me.
King. Father, what ſay you to Philarchus now?
Are you content to pardon his amiſſe?
Dunſton, I promiſe thee, it greeues me much,
To heare what piteous moane Philarchus makes:
Me thinks I ſee ſad ſorrow in his face,
And his humilitie argues him penitent.
But Father, for I will not be the Iudge,
To doome Philarchus either lyfe or death,
Here take my robes, and iudge him as thou wilt,
Fath. Then vertuous Prince, ſeeing you will haue it ſo,
Although the place be farre vnfit for me,
I am content your Grace ſhall haue your mind,
Thus lyke an Aſſe attyred in coſtlie robes,
Or lyke a ring thruſt in a foule Sowes ſnowt,
So doe theſe robes and ſcepter fit mine age:
But for I am Iudge, Philarchus, ſtand thou foorth,
And know, as ther is nothing ſo good, but it hath ſome inconueni-
So there is no man whatſoeuer without ſome fault: (ence,
Yet this is no argument to maintaine thy wilfull diſobedience,
As the Roſe hath his prickle, the fineſt Velvet his bracke,
The fayreſt flower his bran, ſo the beſt wit his wanton will:
But (Philarchus) thou haſt bene more than wanton,
Becauſe thou haſt diſobeyed the lawes both of God and nature,
The teares that thou haſt ſhed, might warrant me
That thou art penitent for thy amiſſe:
Beſides (my ſonne) a fathers naturall care,
Doth chalenge pardon for thy firſt amiſſe.
King. Father, well ſaid, I ſee thou pitieſt him. (larchus
Fath. Nay, ſtay my Lord, this did I ſpeak as father to Phi-
But now my (Lord) I muſt ſpeake as a Iudge.

And now Philarchus,marke what I ſet downe,
Becauſe thou haſt beene diſobedient,
And wronged thy aged father wilfullie,
And giuen a blow to him that nouriſht thee.
And thereby haſt incurd thy mothers curſe:
And in that curſe to feele the wrath of God,
And ſo be hated on the earth mongſt men.
And for I will be found no partiall Iudge,
Becauſe I ſit as Gods Vizegerent now:
Here I doe baniſh thee from Englands bounds,
And neuer to

Kin. There ſtay,now let me ſpeake the reſt:
Philarchus,thou haſt heard thy fathers doome,
And what thy diſobedience mooued him to,
Yet for thou waſt once bedfellow to the king,
And that I loued thee as my ſecond ſelfe,
Thou ſhalt go liue in France,in Flanders,Scotland,or els where,
And haue annual penſion ſent to thee,
There maiſt thou liue in good and honeſt ſort,
Untill thou be recalled by the King.

Phil. Thanks,gratious King, for this great fauour ſhowne,
And may I neuer liue,if I forget,
Your Graces kind and vnerſpected loue,
In fauouring him,whom all the world forſooke:
For which my Orizons ſhall ſtill be ſpent:
Heauens may protect your princelie Maieſtie.
And louing Father , here vpon my knee,
Sorry for my amiſſe,I take my leaue,
Both of your ſelfe,my King,and countrimen.
England,farewell,more dearer vnto me,
Than pen can write,or hart can think of thee. Exit.

King. Farewell Philarchus,and father come to court,
And for Philarchus ſake thou ſhalt not want.

Fath. Thanks(vertuous king)I humblie take my leaue. Exit

King. Dunſton,I promiſe thee I was lyke to weepe,
To heare what pitcous mone Philarchus made,

Dunſton,

Dunſton. Here your Grace hath ſhewed your ſelfe to be
Edgar ſo famed for loue and vertuous gouernment.
And I pray God your Grace may liue to be
Long Englands king to raigne with heritie. Exeunt.

Enter Honeſtie, Conicatcher, Broker, a Gentleman.

Honeſty. IT is ſtrange to ſee how men of honeſtie,
Are troubled manie tymes with ſubtil knauery:
For they haue ſo many clokes to colour their abuſes,
That Honeſty may well ſuſpect them, but dares not detect the
For if he ſhould, they haue by their knauerie
Got ſo many friends, that though neuer ſo bad,
They will ſtand in defence with the beſt.
I was at the water ſide, where I ſaw ſuch deceit,
I dare not ſay knauerie, in paying and receiuing
Cuſtome for outlandiſh ware, that I wondred to ſee,
Yet durſt not complaine of, the reaſon was,
They were countenanced with men of great wealth,
Richer than I a great deale, but not honeſter:
Then I went into the markets, where I ſaw petie knauerie:
In falſe meaſuring corne, and in ſcales,
That wanted no leſſe than two ounces in the pound.
But all this was nothing, ſcant worth the talking of:
But when I came to the Exchange, I eſpyed in a corner of an
An Arch-coloner, a Conicatcher I meane. (Ile,
Which vſed ſuch groſe coloning, as you would wonder to heare:
But here he comes fine and braue,
Honeſty markes him downe for a knaue.

Conicatcher. Why ſo, tis an il wind blowes no man to profit
And he is but a foole that when al failes cannot line vpon his wit,
I haue attyred my ſelfe lyke a very ciuill citizen,
To drawe foure ſcore pound from a couple of fooles,
A Gentleman hauing made ouer his land by deed of gift,
Meanes to colen a broker with a falſe conueiance:
Al's one to me, I ſhall looſe nothing by the bargaine,
But here comes the Broker, I will walk as I regarded him not

Broker. God ſaue you ſir, I ſee you keep your houre,
But heare ye ſir hath the Gentleman that conueiance you told
me of redy, I hope ſir, I ſhal neede miſdoubt no vereit in the mat-
ter, for I meane plainly, and ſo I hope do yett.
Conicatch. Sir, as concerning the conueiance, I aſſure you
And he hath ſuch good intereſt in it, (tis ſo good
That were I furniſht with ſo much money preſently,
No man in the woꝛld ſhould haue it but my ſelfe,
And foꝛ my owne part, you needs not ſuſpect me,
Foꝛ I would not diſcredit my ſelfe foꝛ a thouſand pound,
Foꝛ the Gentleman is my very friend,
And being in ſome want, is enfoꝛſt to pawne lande.
Foꝛ the ſupplying of a preſent neceſſitie.
Tuſh, the intereſt is good, I warrant you.
Honeſty. And thats much woꝛth, ſome wil ſay,
A crafty knaue needs no broker,
But here is a crafeie knaue and a broker to:
Then imagin there wants not a knaue.
Broker. But tell me ſir, when did he promiſe to be here,
What, will it be long ere he come?
Conicat. May, it will not be long ere he come,
Foꝛ the conueyance was made ere I came from the ſcriuenars,
And in good time, here he comes, God ſaue you ſir,
Here is the man I told you of, that wold lend you the money,
He is a very honeſt man, and but foꝛ my ſake I know
He would not do it, but is the land diſpatcht another way:
If you be ready to ſeale, he is readie with the money,
Heare you (ſir) you haue a good bargain, diſpatch it quicklie.
Brok. Being aduertiſed by my friend, this honeſt merchant,
That you haue certaine land to pawne foꝛ preſent money,
Now I had not ſo much money of mine owne at this tyme,
But I made meanes to boꝛrow ſo much of a friend of mine,
Becauſe I would not haue you fal into bad mens handling
Gent. I thank you ſir foꝛ this vnſpeakeable fauour,
If you deale amiſſe with me, I am vndone foꝛ euer. (pound,
Brok. I would not deal amiſſe with any man foꝛ a thouſand

Honeſty.

Honeſtie. And yet he will cut a mans throte for twelue pence, Here is a cluſter of knaues, here lackes but the baily of Hexham

Brok. Wel ſir, here is the mony, wil it pleaſe you ſeale the aſ-

Gent. With all my heart. (ſurance

Honeſt. God ſaue her ſirs, and her good friendes, is a poore Welſhman, come as far as Carnaruan in Wales to receiue a litle money, and here a has paid her I cannot tell what. Here you maſter, wat is it not braſſe money?

Brok. No, honeſt fellow, tis a good Angel in gold.

Honeſt. Who told him my name? heare you maiſter, a has a great deale more in her boſome, but a will take her leaue.

Conicatch. Nay, ſtay and dyne with me: I muſt fetch him ouer for all his golde.

Hone. Mary I thank her good Maiſter, I wil waight vpon her I warrant you.

Brok. Now ſir, haue you ſealde and ſubſcribed?

Gent. I haue ſir.

Brok. And you deliuer this as your deed to my vſe?

Gent. With all my heart Syr, and hope you wil vſe me well.

Brok. We wil talk of that another time, here is your money.

Gent. I thank you ſir, Ile be gone.

Conicatch. Heare you ſir, was not this brauely done?

Gent. Excellent: hold, here is fourty pound, as I promiſed thee.

Conicatch. I thank you ſir: do you heare Sir, you haue got a thouſand pound by the bargaine: but much good may it doe you.

Brok. God a marcy, and here's fourty pound for thy paines, Such another match, and Ile giue thee a hundred pound.

Conicatc. I thank you ſir, God bwy: now to my welſhmans Sirra, let me ſee thy peece of gold,
Ile tell thee whether it be weight or no?
Haſt thou anie more, Ile giue thee white mony for it.
Honeſt. Yes, a has a great deale more in her boſome,
But a will haue no wit money: O a loues led mony.

Conic. Wel, Ile keep thē for thee til thou come to my houſe.

Hon. Why Cutbert, wilt thou neuer leaue thy old knauery? Why, we ſhould gree together lyke belles,

If thou wert but hanged firſt,
Why we are as neere kin together,
As the Cats of Banbery be to the bels of Lincolne.
Why man, we are all birds of a feather,
And whoſoeuer ſaies nay, we will hold together.
Come you mad ſlaue, thou doeſt not know me,
Tuſh, I haue done many better tricks than this.

Conic. Why (you baſe ſlaue) take you me for your fellow?
Why, I am of good reputation in the citie,
And held in account with the beſt.

Honeſty. And yet thou art Cutbert the Conicatcher,
The Bailiefs ſonne of Hexham, whoſe father being dead,
The deuill carried to hell for his knauerie:
How ſayeſt thou, art not thou his ſonne?
This graue blacke cloake makes you ſo proud,
You haue forgotten who was your father.

Coni. Nay, I haue not forgotten that my father was a Bailiefe,
A man that would liue to himſelfe.
And yet in faith, he gaue me nothing at his death,
But good counſell, how to liue in the world.
But ſirra, as thou knoweſt me, I pray thee bewray me not,
And in any thing I can, commaund me.

Honeſt. Tuſh, feare not me, I will be as ſecrete as thy ſelfe:
But ſirra, tis thus, if thou wilt doe one thing,
I ſhall tell thee, I will giue thee an hundred pound,
Tis nothing with thee I am ſure.

Con. Tuſh, tel me what it is: Ile doe it, I warrant thee.

Honeſt. Nothing but this, to ſweare vpon a booke
That thou ſaweſt a Gentleman pay a Farmer
Foure hundred pound, as the laſt payment of a Farme,
That the ſaid Gentleman bought of him.

Con. Tuſh, if this be all, let me alone. I will doe it.
Why, tis nothing for me to ſweare,
For I am forſworne already, but when is the day?

Honeſt. Why to morrow.

Conic. But where ſhall I meet you?

Hon

Honeſty. Why vpon the exchange at eight a clocke.
Con. I will not miſſe, til that time fare well. Exit.
Hon. Farewel, nay, you will ſcant farewel
By that tyme I haue done, but I muſt about my buſines,
To fynd ſome knacke to know this knaue at large.

Enter Ethenwald.

Ethen. The night drawes on, & Phœbus is declining towards the Weſt.
Now ſhepheards bear their flocks vnto the folds,
And wintred Oxen ſodered in their ſtalles
Now leaue to feede, and gin to take their reſt,
Blacke duſkie clouds inuyron round the globe,
And heauen is couered with a Sable robe,
Now am I come to doe the kings commaund,
To court a Wench & win her for the King.
But if I lyke her well, I ſay no more,
Tis good to haue a hatch before the doore:
But firſt I will moue her Father to preferr
The earneſt ſuit I haue in canualing,
So may I ſee the Maid, woo, wed, I and bed her too:
Who is here? what ho.

Enter Oſricke.

Oſ. Earl Ethenwald, welcome, how fares our friends at court
What cauſe conſtrains your Honor, that thus late
You viſite vs, that dreame not of your comming?
Ethenwald. My Lord, I am come vnlooked for, very true,
So is my cumming yet conceald from you.
Oſr. Your Honor ſhall repoſe you here to night,
And earlie as you pleaſe, begin your talke,
Tyme ſerues not now, come Ethenwald,
As welcome as the King himſelfe to me.
Eth. Now Ethenwald, if Fortune fauour thee,
Thou maiſt proue happie loue to Alfrida. Exeunt.

Enter Honeſtie, and the King diſguiſed.

Hon. This is the place, and this the appointed tyme,
I know heel keep his word, for he thinks me his friend.
King. But tell me Honeſtie, am I not well diſguiſed.

Can

Can any man diſcerne me by my lookes to be the King,
Take heed of that, for then our game is mard:
And haſt thou promiſed him what reward he ſhall haue.
Hon. Tuſh feare not you, for you neuer knew honeſt man diſ-
ſemble with his friend,
Though many friends diſſemble with honeſt men:
But, my Lord, the cards be ſhufled, and here comes a knaue.

Enter Conicatcher.

Conic. Tis ſtrange to ſee how men of our knowledge liue,
And how we are hated of the baſer ſort,
Becauſe (forſooth) we liue vpon our wit:
But let the baſer ſort thinke as they will,
For he may beſt be termed a Gentleman,
That when all fayles, can liue vpon his wit.
And if all fayles, then haue I got a wench,
That cuts and deales, to maintaine my expence,
Now I vſe her, as men vſe ſweeteſt flowers,
That while they are ſweet and pleaſant to the eie,
I doe regard them for their pleaſant ſmell:
But when their cullour fades, and ſent decaies,
I caſt them off for men to trample on:
But to the purpoſe, here is the Gentleman
My honeſt friend did lately tell me of.
Sir, though I had another buſineſſe of import,
That might haue hindred me for comming here,
Yet in regard I am loth to breake my word,
I haue ſet my other buſineſſe cleane apart,
Becauſe you ſhould not iudge amiſſe of me,
Honeſt. I find you kind Sir, and your ſelf ſhal ſee
How I will labour to requite your curteſie.
This is the honeſt man I told you of,
One that will doe you pleaſure in the cauſe,
So be it you will content him for his paines.
King. Els God forbid, and good ſir, thus it is,
I bought a farme of one that dwels here by,
And for an earneſt gaue an hundred pound,

The

The reſt was to be paid as ſixe weekes paſt,
Now ſir, I would haue you as witneſſe,
That at my houſe you ſaw me pay three hundred pound,
And for your paines I will giue you a hundred pound:
Beſides, I will ſtand your friend in what I may,
You heare the cauſe, what will your conſcience ſerue you to do it?

Conic. How ſay you ſir, my conſcience, then you touch me,
I tell you ſir, my conſcience will ſerue me to doe more than this:
Why, I haue bene a poſte knight in Weſtminſter this xii. yeare,
And ſworne to that which no one els would venture on.
Why, I haue ſworne againſt mine owne father for money:
I haue ſworne right or wrong any wayes for money,
whē I haue receiued mony before witnes, I ſwore to the cōtrary
And do you miſdoubt me in ſo sleight a matter as this,
When I haue ſworne againſt father, mother, and all my kin?

Honeſt. I told you ſir how reſolute you ſhould find him,
He doeth it without feare, I warrant you: (your purpoſe,
I think that in London you could not haue found a man ſo fit for
I knew his father (ſir) a man of honeſt reputation,
And one whoſe lyfe was witneſſe to the lyfe he led,
He was a Bailieſe (ſir) though I ſay't, but no Bayliefe that vſde
He had too good a conſcience for that. (deceit,

King. All the better for that, for it ſhould ſeem by his behaueor
That he hath had good bringing vp.

Conicatc. Indeed my father in his lyfe time was a man,
Giuen to the feare of God, and to vſe much deuotion.

Hon. I, but he gaue nothing for Gods ſake, except it were
hard words or blowes, and they had bene better kept then giuen:
But huſht, here comes the Iudge.

Enter Perin a Iudge, and Dunſton a Farmer.

King. Heare you ſir, if you be in readines, here is the Iudge.

Conic. I ſir, feare not, I warrant you, is that your aduerſary?
What an old cruſt it is?

Honeſt. I think the villaine hath a face hardened with ſteel,
He could neuer be ſo impudent els.

Dunſton. If it pleaſe your Worſhip, this is the man,

That wrongfully would haue my farme from me,
Facing me downe that he hath paid me that,
Which he neuer offred,nor I neuer receiued:
And this day he hath promiſed to make proofe,
That he hath paid me ful foure hundred pound.
King. And ſo I can,and heres my witnes to it,
That ſaw me when I paid the money.
Dunſton. Why,I am ſure he wil not ſay it,
I neuer ſaw the man in all my lyfe.
Conic. No ſir:but I ſaw you,and was a witnes,
When this Gentlemã paid you three hundred pound
As the laſt paiment for the farme he bought.
Perin. But where was the money tendered?
Con. At the Gentlemans houſe.
Per. You ſee father,this marchant wil be witnes
That he ſaw ſo much money tendred,
And you receiued it,being full ſatiſfyed,
As the laſt payment for the farme he bought,
And if this marchant take his oath againſt you,
That ſeuen daies paſt he ſaw the mony tendered,
I muſt paſſe ſentence then againſt you needs.
But wil you ſweare on the bible this is true?
Coni. I ſir,and to that intent I came hether,
For I wil neuer refuſe to ſwear a truth while I liue
Dunſton. Yet ere thou ſpeake,vouchſafe to heare me ſpeake.
Full three ſcore Winters Gentle ſir I haue paſt,
And age hath brought gray haires vpon my head.
Looke but vpon my face,and thou ſhalt ſee,
The perfect patterne of humilitie.
Thou man of worth, or citizen,what ere thou be,
Weigh but my charge,and then thou wilt not ſwear
I haue fiue ſonnes,al pretie tender babes,
That liue vpon the farme that he would haue,
Twelue hundred ſheep do feed vpon the plaines,
That yearlie bring a great increaſe to me,
Beſides a hundred Oxen fatly fed:

That euerie Winter feed within my ſtalles,
And twentie poore men liuing neere my houſe,
I daylie feed, and all vpon my Farme:
Go but among my neighbours, where I dwell,
And heare what good report they giue of me.
The poore man neuer yet went from my doore,
But to my power I did releeue his want:
I was no Farmer that inricht my ſelfe:
By raiſing markets and oppreſſing poore,
But I haue ſold my corne full manie tymes
At better rate, than I could wel affoord,
And all to help my needie brethren:
Then ere thou ſweareſt, cal al theſe things to mind,
And thou wilt weep, and leaue to ſweare vntrueth.
Confuſion to thy bodie and thy ſoule.

Perin. Wel, if thou be wel aduiſed, take thy oath,
But yet remember before whome thou ſweareſt,
The God of trueth and perfect equitie,
Which will reuenge wrong to the innocent,
with thouſand plagues and torture worſe than death.

Con. By the holy contents of this Bible,
And by that iuſt God, before whome I ſtand, I ſaw the man.

King. Peace, ſhameleſſe villain, execrable wretch,
Monſter of nature, degenerate miſcreant,
Who euer knew or heard ſo vile an oath,
Vildly pronounc'd by ſuch a damned ſlaue,
Haue I ſuch monſtrous vipers in my land,
That with their verie breaths infect the aire,
Say Dunſton, haſt thou euer heard the lyke.

Dunſt. My Liege, ſuch lothſome weeds muſt needs infect the corne,
Such Tankers perish both the root and branch,
Vnleſſe they be ſoone ſpied and weeded out:

Kin. Ile be the husbandman to mowe ſuch Tares,
Here Honeſty, let him be manacled:
And ſcar his forehead, that he may be knowne,
As Cain for murder, he for periurie.

Conicar. I beſeech your Grace be good to me.

Hon. I, you ſhal haue a cold yron clapt in your forehead, A hot one I would ſay, you are a ſlaue indeede.

Conicatcher. Good Honeſty.

Hone. Good villaine, theres no help for you. Exeunt

Enter Ethenwald alone.

Eth. My fancies thoughts, lyke the labouring Spyder,
That ſpreads her nets, to entrap the ſillie Flie:
Or lyke the reſtleſſe billowes of the ſeas,
That euer alter by the fleeting ayre,
Still houering paſt their woonted paſſions,
Makes me amazed in theſe extremities,
The King commands me on his embaſſage,
To Oſricks daughter, beauteous Alfrida,
The height and pride of all this bounding ile,
To poſte amaine, plead loue in his behalfe,
To court for him, and woo, and wed the mayd,
But haue you neuer heard that theame,
Decent in loue is but a merriment,
To ſuch as ſeeke a riuall to preuent,
Whether (diſtraught) romes my vnruly thoughts,
It is the King I coſen of his choiſe,
And he nil brook Earl Ethenwald ſhould prooue
Falſe to his Prince, eſpecially in loue.
The thus it ſhal be, Ile tel the King the maid is fair,
Of nut browne culloure, comelie and fair ſpoken,
Worthie companion to an Earle or ſo:
But not a Bride for Edgar, Englands King,
This will alay the ſtrong effects in loue.
Fame wrought in Edgars mind of Alfrida.
Wel, Ile to court, and dallie with the King,
And worke ſome means to draw his mynde from loue.

Enter a Knight, Squire, and Farmer.

Knight Neighbour Walter I cannot but admire to ſee
How houſekeeping is decayed within
this thirtie yeare,

But

But where the fault is God knowes, I knowe not:
My father in his lyfe time gaue hospitality to all ſtrangers, and
Diſtreſſed trauellers, his table was neuer emptie of breade, beefe
And beere, he was woont to keep a hundred tall men in his hall.
He was a feaſter of all commers in generall,
And yet was he neuer in want of money:
I thinke God did bleſſe him with increaſe, for his bountiful mind
Farm. Truly ſir, I am ſorrie, you ar fallen into decay,
In that you want to maintaine houſhould charge,
And whereof comes this want, I will tell you ſir,
Tis only throw your great houſekeeping:
Be ruled by me, and doe as I aduiſe you:
You muſt learne to leaue ſo great a traine of men,
And keepe no more than needs of force you muſt,
And thoſe you keepe, let them be ſimple men,
For they will be content with ſimple fare,
Keepe but a boy or two within your houſe,
To run of errants, and to wait on you,
And for your kitchin, keep a woman cooke,
One that will ſerue for thirtie ſhillings a yeare:
And by that means you ſaue two liueries,
And if ye will keep retainers towards you,
Let them be Farmers, or rich husbandmen,
For you ſhal find great profit (ſir) in keeping them:
For if you ſtand in need of corne or hay,
Send but to them, and you may haue it ſtrait:
And if you kill a Beefe, let it be ſo leane
The Butcher nor the Graſyer will not buy it,
Your drinke is too ſtrong, and taſtes too much of male,
Tuſh, ſingle beere is better far, both for your profit, and your ſer-
And at a Chriſtmaſſe time ſcarſt none at al, (uants health
But ſuch as yeeld you ſome commoditie:
I meane ſuch as will ſend you now and then,
Fat Geeſe and Capons to keep houſe withall,
To theſe and none els would I haue you liberall.
Knight. Why neighbor, my goods are lent me to no other end

But to releeue my needie brethren, but God I hope hath in ſtore

Far. I, truſt you to that, & you may hap die a begger: (for me.

Squ. Why ſir, if he ſhould not truſt in God, in whom ſhould he truſt, for God is the giuer of all good whatſoeuer.

Far. True, and yet tis good for a man to truſt to himſelfe now and then: for if you be downe, and bid God help you vp, and do not help your ſelf, you may fortune lie and periſh: and therefore, ſerue God on Sundaies, as you are appointed, and thereby hope to be ſaued, for by your almes deeds you cannot, for if you giue to the poore, there be manie will ſay, he thinks to bee ſaued by his almes deedes: and thus you ſhal be ill thought on for your good wil, and therfore learn to prouide for your ſelf, let God prouide for the poore

Knig. I tel you neighbor, my great grandfather, & all my predeceſſors haue beue held in good regard for their good houſekeeping, and (God willing) their good names ſhal neuer take an exigent in me, for I wil (God willing) keepe ſuch hoſpitalitie to my death, as my ſtate can maintaine, and I will rather ſell my land, to maintain houſ-keeping, then keeping my land make ſale of my good name for houſekeeping, but ſtay, who comes here.

Enter two poore old men and a Bayliefe.

One old man. God ſaue you ſir, I pray be good to me for cham a poore man, and I cannot tell what you will doe, for you ſay my horſe hath broken into your corn, or your corne into my horſe, But indeed my neighbor ſaw your boy driue my horſe into a field But Ile ſtand to nothing, nowe I am warnd with a peece of paper, and a litle ware, to prepare or proceed to London, And there I am inuented, I cannot tell for what: The Bailiefe here hath arreſted me ere I was weary againſt my will: he ſaid it was vpon your ſuit, & yet he laid his hands on me, May more, on my ſhoulder.

Another old. And ſir, and it may pleaſe you, I borrowed certen corn, and I brought you your corne again, and yet you reſt me.

Far. True ſir, but then was corne ſold for foure ſhillings a buſhell, and now tis ſold for two.

Kni. I ſir, but he borrowed corne, and promiſed to pay you corn againe, and you can haue but ſo much as you lent:

For

For if he ſhould pay you at the rate you demande,
You wold haue for the twentie buſhels you lent, fourtie,
Which were neither right nor conſcience.

Far. O ſir, I pray let me alone with my conſcience,
You would haue me giue al I haue away to the poore, & want as you do, I pray let me alone to deale for my ſelfe: heare you, haue you reſted them?

Bail. I haue ſir as you commanded me.

Far. Then to priſon with them, til they haue paid ſuch damages as the law ſhal award them.

One poor. Hear you ſir, if you ſhuld bid your boy breake downe a gap, and driue in my horſe, twere litle better than plaine knauerie, for my horſe is as honeſt a horſe, as any is in this towne.

Another. Wel neighbor, we wil haue the horſe examined before an officer, and my boy Jack ſhal write what the horſe ſpeaks and if the horſe ſay a was driuen in againſt his wil,
Then you may haue the law of him, neighbor,
For all the horſes in the pariſh wil be ſworne for his horſe.
But Ile ſtand to nothing. (with them.

Far. Wel, to priſon with the, til they haue paid your due, away

One poor. May, I pray, be more miſerable to me, and I wil giue you fourtie ſhillings when I haue it.

Far. By the Mas the knaue hath a prietie cottage,
Ile ſee and I can get that: ſirra, you haue an old cottage,
If you will make me that ouer by deed of gift,
I am content to draw my action.

Another p. My houſe: why tis my goods, my wife, my land,
My horſe my aſſe, or any thing that is his: no you Caterpiller,
I will neuer make away my houſe, I wil die firſt.

Squi. But tel me ſir, howe much wold you haue of them for their treſpaſſe?

Far. Mary, for fourtie ſhillings, and yet I befriend them,
Why ſir, I hope you will not pay it for them?

Kni. But I wil: ſirra Bailie, I will anſwere the poore mens debts, and come home to me for thy fee anon, go old men,
Get you home and praiſe God.

One poor. Mary Jeſus bleſſe yourmaiſtr, how many ſuch good
Knightes haue you now a dayes?
Anoth. Too few, neighbor, the more is the pitie. Exeunt
But come lets away.
Knight. But who comes here?

Enter Perin and Honeſty.

Per. God ſaue you gentlemen, the king greets you, and at this
Hauing ſome occaſion, to vſe mony, hath ſent to know (time,
What you that be Knightes and Squires will lend his Grace,
And you maiſter Farmer, be briefe (ſir) for I cannot ſtay.
Kni. Sir, though houſe-keeping be ſome hinderance to my willing
mind by reaſon it robs me of that, which ſhuld bewray my louing
mind both to my prince & country, money I meane which at this
time I ſtand in ſome want of, yet of that ſmal ſtore that I haue,
am willing to impart the lending of the king xx. pound, and more.
I aſſure you I am not able.
Perin. Very wel, and what ſay you maiſter Squire.
Squire, I ſay that my reuenewes are but ſmall, yet I will
lend his Maieſtie ten pound.
Per. Very wel, but what ſaith the Farmer?
What can he ſpare the King?
Far. Marry ſir, I am a poore Farmer, & yet I can affoord
To lend the King a hundred or two of pounds,
Any heare you ſir, if you prefer a ſuit I haue to the King,
I will giue you fourtie Angels for your paines:
Beſides, I will giue you the keeping of a dozen iades:
And now and then meat for you and your horſe,
If you come to my houſe and lie a whole yeare.
Per. Why thats well ſaid, and I commend thy honeſt mind,
Would all men wer of thy mind:
I warrant thee, thou art an honeſt man, & one that loues the king
But tel me, what wouldſt thou haue me doe?
Far. Nothing but procure me the Kings letter to conuey corn
beyond ſeas, for in England it is ſo good cheap, that a man can
make no liuing by ſelling thereof: therfore if the King wil grant
me his letter, I will at any time, lend him fiue or ſixe hundred
pound,

and perhaps neuer aſk it again, and I wil not forget your paines.

Per. Sir, feare not, I wil do it for you, I warrant you,
For I tel you, I can do much with the King. (for,

Hon. I beleeue you wil do more than you will be commended
The Courtier reſembleth the Jay, that decketh her ſelf with the feathers of other birds, to make her ſelf glorious:
So the Courtier muſt be braue, tho he be hangd at the gallous.

Far. Wel ſir, will it pleaſe you to come and dine with me.

Per. I thanke you ſir hartily.

Far. But whats he there in your company.

Perin. A plaine fellow, and his name is Honeſty.

Far. O let him go where he will, for he ſhal not dine with me.

Hon. See how the Farmer feares my name,
What wold he doe if he knew my nature:
But hear you (maiſter Courtier) ſhall I dine with you:
I promiſe you ſir, I am very hungrie,

Per. Trulie Honeſty, if I were furniſht with money,
I would not ſtick to giue thee thy dinner,
But now thou ſeeſt I am but a gueſt my ſelfe.

Far. Truly honeſt fellow, if I were certaine of my cheere, I wold bid thee to dinner, but know not my proviſiõ I promiſe thee

Kni. Heare you ſir, will it pleaſe you to take part of a peece of beefe with me, you ſhal be welcome.

Perin. I thank you ſir, but I muſt dine with my honeſt friend here, els I would not refuſe your gentle offer. Exeunt.

Hon. See how he can vſe my name and not me,
But I perceiue I may goe dine with Duke Humfrie,
God bwy Gentlemen, for none here hath occaſion to vſe Honeſty

Kni. Yes Honeſty, thou ſhalt be my brothers gueſt and mine.

Hon. Mary and I thank you to, for now the world may ſay,
That Honeſty dines with Hoſpitality to day, Exeunt.

Enter Oſrick and Alfrida, and to them Ethenwald.

Oſr. DAughter, ſee that you entertaine the Earle,
As beſt beſeemes his ſtate and thy degree:
He comes to ſee whether Fame haue worthily
Bene niggard, in commending thee or no,
So ſhall thy vertues be admired at the court,

And thou be praiſed for kind and debonair,
For curteſie contents a Courtier oft:
When nothing els ſeemes pleaſant in his eies.
Alfr. Father, you ſhall perceiue that Alfrida
Will doe her beſt in honouring of your age,
To entertaine the Earle of Cornwell ſo,
That he ſhall think him highlie fauoured,
Throw louing ſpeech and curteous entertain.
Of. How fares my L. of Cornwel, what diſpleaſed
Or troubled with a mood thats male content?
Eth. Not male content, and yet I am not well,
For I am troubled with a painfull rume,
That when I would be merry, troubles me,
And commonlie it holds me in my eies,
With ſuch extreames, that I can ſcantly ſee.
Ofr. How long haue you bene troubled with the (paine,
Or is it a paine that you haue vſuall?
Or is it ſome water, that by taking cold,
Is falne into your eies, and troubles you?
Eth. I cannot tel, but ſure it paines me much,
Nor did it euer trouble me till nowe,
For till I came to lodge within your houſe,
My eies were cleare, and I neuer felt the paine.
Of. I am ſorry that my houſe ſhuld cauſe your griefe
Daughter, if you haue any ſkil at all,
I pray you ble your cunning with the Earle,
And ſee if you can eaſe him of his paine.
Alf. Father, ſuch ſkill as I receiued of late,
By reading many pretie pend receites,
Both for the ache of head, and paine of eyes.
I will, if ſo it pleaſe the Earle to accept it,
Indeuour what I may to comfort him.
My Lord, I haue waters of approoued worth,
And ſuch as are not common to be found:
Any of which, if it pleaſe your honour, ble them,
I am in hope, will help you to your ſight,
Eth. No (matchleſſe Alfrida) they will doe me no good,

For

For I am troubled only when I looke.
Alfrida. On what (my Lord) or whome?
Ethen. I cannot tell.
Alf. Why let me see your eies (my Lord) looke vpon me.
Eth. Then twil be worse.
Alf. What, if you looke on me? then Ile be gone.
Eth. Nay stay, sweet loue, stay beauteous Alfrida,
And giue the Earle of Cornwel leaue to speake:
Know Alfrida, thy beautie hath subdued,
And captiuate the Earle of Cornwels heart
Briefly, I louethee, seeme I neere so bold,
So rude and rashlie to prefer my sute,
And if your father giue but his consent,
Eased be that paine that troubles Ethenwald.
And this considered, Ofricke shall procure,
My father, and his daughter be my loue,
Speake Ofrick, shall I haue her I or no?
Of. My Lord with al my hart, you haue my consent
If so my daughter please to condiscend.
Ethen. But what saith Alfrida?
Alf. I say (my Lord) that seing my father grants,
I will not gainsay, what his age thinks meet,
I no appoint my selfe (my Lord) at your dispose,
Eth. Wel Ofrick, nowe you see your daughter's mine,
But tel me when shall be the wedding day,
Ofr. On Monday next, till then you are my guest.
Ethen. Well Ofricke, when our nuptiall rites are past,
I must to Court of businesse to the King.
Alfr. Let that be as you please my Lord,
But stay not long, for I shall hardlie brooke your absence then.
Eth. Feare not Alfrida, I will not stay there long,
But come, let vs in Father, pray leade the way. Exeunt
Enter the King and Dunston. (Kings

King. TEl me Dunston, what thinkest thou of the fauors of
Dun. I think of Kings fauors as of a Marigold flower,
That as long as the Sun shineth openeth her leaues,

And with the leaſt cloud cloſeth againe:
Or lyke the Violets in America, that in ſommer yeeld an odiffe-
And in winter a moſt infectious ſauour: (rous ſmell,
For at euery ful ſea they flouriſh, or at euery dead ope they vade:
The fiſh Palerna being perfect white in the calme,
Yet turneth blacke with euery ſtorme:
Or lyke the trees in the deſerts of Africa,
That flouriſh but while the ſouthweſt wind bloweth:
Euen ſo (my Lord) is the fauours of kings to them they fauour,
For as their fauours giue lyke, ſo their frownes yeeld death.

King. Wel ſaid, Dunſton, but what merits he that diſſembles with his Soueraigne?

Dunſton. In my opinion (my Lord) he merits death.

King. Then aſſure thy ſelfe, if Ethenwald diſſemble, he ſhall die: but who comes here? Perin, what newes, that thou commeſt in ſuch haſt: and what is he that beares thee company?

Per. It is my gratious Lord an honeſt man,
And one it ſeemes that loues you Maieſtie:
For as your Grace gaue me in charge, (could make,
I went about into the countrey, to ſee what ſummes of money I
Among the cheefeſt of the communaltie:
And mongſt the richeſt Knights that I could fynd,
They would lend your Grace at moſt but twenty pound,
And euery Squire would lend you Grace but ten:
Then came I mongſt the reſt to this plaine man,
And aſked him what he would lend the king,
He anſwered Sir, you ſee I am but poore,
Not halfe ſo wealthy as a Knight or Squire,
And yet in ſigne of dutie to his Grace,
I will lende his Maieſtie two hundred pound.

King. Thanks honeſt fellow, for thy loue to vs,
And if I may but pleaſure thee in ought,
Command me to the vtter moſt I may:
England hath too few men of thy good mind.

Enter Honeſtie and Piers plowman.

Honeſty, what newes? where haſt thou bene ſo long?

Honeſt. A my Lord, I haue bene ſearching for a priuie knaue
One (my Lord) that feeds vpon the poore commons,
And makes poore Piers ploughman weare a thread bare coate,
It is a farmer (my Lord) which buyes vp all the corn in the mar-
ket, and ſends it away beyond ſeas, & thereby feeds the enemie.

Kin. Alas, poore piers plowman, what aileſt thou: why doeſt
thou weep, peace man, if any haue offended thee,
Thou ſhalt be made amends vnto the moſt.

piers plow. I beſeech your Grace to pitie my diſtreſſe,
There is an vnknowne theefe that robs the common wealth,
And makes me and my poore wife and children beg for mainte-
The tyme hath bene (my Lord) in diebus illis, (nance,
That the Plowmans coat was of good homeſpun ruſſet cloth,
Whereof neither I nor my ſeruants had no want,
Though now both they and I want,
And all by this vnknown Farmer:
For there cannot be an aker of ground to be ſold,
But he will find money to buy it: nay my Lord, he hath money
to buy whole Lordſhips, and yet but a Farmer,
I haue kept a poore houſe where I dwel this four ſcore yeare,
Yet was I neuer driuen to want till now:
I beſeech your Grace, as you haue ſtill bene iuſt,
To ſeek redreſſe for this oppreſſion
I beſeech your Grace reade my humble petition.

Kin. Let me ſee the humble petition of poore piers plowman,
Alaſſe poore piers, I haue heard my father ſay, (wealth,
That piers plowman was one of the beſt members in a commō
For his table was neuer emptie of bread, beefe, and beere,
As a help to all diſtreſſed trauellers: but where thou telleſt me,
I harbour him, and he is dallie vnder my elbow,
I aſſure thee tis more than I know, for I harbour none but this
which is my honeſt friend.

Hon. Is this your honeſt friend: the deuill a is (my Lord)
This is he: if you doubt my word to be true, call in Clarke of the
Aſſyſes, now ſhall your Grace ſee,
How Honeſty can ſhake out a knaue in this company:

Enter Clarke of the Aſſyſe.

Sirra, tell me who hath moſt poore men in ſuit at this Syſes?

Clark. That hath Walter would haue more:
He hath one poore man in ſuit for certaine Barlie,
And another for that his horſe was taken in his corne.

Honeſt. But what inditements are againſt him, read them

Read the Inditement.

Clark. Firſt, he hath conueyed corne out of the land to feede the Enemie. Item, hee hath turned poore Piers Plowman out of doores by his great raiſing of rents.
Item, he is knowne to bee a common diſturber of men of their quiet, by ſeruing Writs on them, and bringing them to London, to their vtter vndoing.
Alſo, he keeps corne in his barne, and ſuffers his brethren and neighbours to lie and want; and thereby makes the market ſo deare, that the poore can buy no corne.

Kin. Vnough: now ſit vpon thee, thou monſter of nature,
To ſeeke the vtter vndoing of manie, to inrich thy ſelfe:
Honeſty, take him, and vſe him as thou wilt.

Honeſty. Come ſir, I thinke I found out your knauerie,
Away ſir, and beare your fellow company.

Exeunt omnes but the King and Dunſton.

Enter Ethenwald.

Eth. Health and good hap befall your Maieſtie,

Kin. Ethenwald welcome, how fares our beautious loue,
Be briefe man, what, will ſhe loue or no?

Eth. Then as your Grace did giue to me in charge,
I haue vſd hard entry in my ſuite euery way,
And communed with the maid you ſo commend:
For when the Sun, cleere Father of the day,
Eie of the world, King of the ſpangled vale,
Had run the circuit of the Horizon,
And that Arctofelex, the nights bright ſtar,
Had brought fair Luna from the purpled mayne,
Where ſhe was daliying with her wanton loue,
To lend her light to wearie trauellers.

Then twas my chance to arriue at Oſricks houſe
But being late I could not then vnfolde
The meſſage that your Grace had giuen in charge:
But in the morne Aurora did appeare,
At ſight of whom the Welkin ſtraight did cleare.
Then was the ſpangled vale of heauen drawne in,
And phœbus roſe lyke heauens imperiall King:
And ere the Sun was mounted fiue degrees
The maid came downe and gaue me the good day.
King. But being come, what ſaid ſhe then?
How lykeſt thou her, what is ſhe fair or no?
Eth. My Lord, ſhe is colloured lyke the Scythia Maide,
That challenged Lucio at the Olympian games,
Well bodied, but her face was ſomething blacke,
Lyke theſe that follow houſhold buſineſſe:
Her eies wer hollow ſunke into her head,
Which makes her haue a clowdie countenance,
She hath a prettie tongue, I muſt confeſſe,
And yet (my Lord) ſhe is nothing eloquent.
King. Why then (my Lord,) theres nothing good in her.
Eth. Yes my Lord, ſhe is fit to ſerue an Earle or ſo,
But far vnfit for Edgar Englands King.
King. So then ſhe is fit for Ethenwald our Cornish Earle,
But far vnfit for Edgar Englands king:
Well Ethenwald, I ſound your policie:
But tell me ifaith, doeſt thou loue the maide.
Speake truelie man, diſſemble not.
Ethen. I doe (my gratious Lord) and therewithall,
Intreate your Maieſtie to pardon me.
King. Ethenwald, I am content to pardon thee,
And will be with thee my ſelfe ere long,
To doe thee honour in thy mariage,
And therefore Ethenwald thou muſt depart,
And leaue vs til we viſite thee at home.
Eth. My gratious Lord I humbly take my leaue.
Dunſt. If it pleaſe your Grace pardon me, and giue me leaue

I would gladlie bring my Nephew on the way.
Kin. With all my heart Dunston, but stay not long.
Eth. I humbly take my leaue of your Maiestie.
Exeunt Dunst. and Ethenwald.
Kin. Farewel Ethenwald, but Perin tell me now,
What doest thou thinke of Alfrida,
Is she so foule as Ethenwald reports her,
Beleeue me then she had bene vnfit for me.
per. My gratious Lord, Ethenwald hath dissembled with your Maiestie,
For Alfrida is fair and vertuous:
For last night, being in priuate conference,
He could me he had deuised a mean
To collour with the King by forged excuse.
No, no, (quoth he) my Alfrida is faire,
As is the radiant North star Cynthaline,
That guides the wet and wearie Trauellor,
Soust with the surge of Neptunes watery main,
And thus my Lord, he fell to praising her,
And from his pocket straight he drew this counterfeit,
And said twas made by beauteous Alfrida.
King. A face more faire than is the Suns bright beames,
Or snow white Alpes beneath faire Cynthea,
Who would refuse with Hercules to spin,
When such faire faces bears vs companie,
Faire Pollyxena neuer was so faire:
Nor she that was proud loue to Troylus.
Great Alexanders loue, Queen of Amazons,
Was not so faire as is faire Alfrida.
But perin, be thou secrete to the King,
And I will sound these subtill practizes,
And Ethenwald, be sure I will quittance thee,
And teach thee how to dallie with thy King,
But perin lets to Court vntill to morne,
And then weele take horse and away. Exeunt.
Enter mad men of Gotcham, to wit, a Miller,
a Cobler, and a Smith.

Miller. Now let vs conſult among our ſelues,
How to miſbehaue our ſelues to the Kings worſhip,
Jeſus bleſſe him: and when he comes, to deliuer him this petition
I think the Smith were beſt to do it, for hees a wiſe man.

Cobler. Naighbor, he ſhall not doe it, as long as Jefferay the Tranſlater is Maior of the towne. (the Mace?

Smith. And why, I pray, becauſe I would haue put you from

Miller. No, not for that, but becauſe he is no good fellow,
Nor he will not ſpend his pot for companíe.

Smith. Why (ſir) there was a god of our occupation, and I charge you by vertue of his godhead, to let me deliuer the petitiõ.

Cob. But ſoft you, your God was a Cuckold, and his Godhead was the horne, and thats the Armes of the Godhead you call vpon. Go, your are put down with your occupation, and now I will not grace you ſo much as to deliuer the petition, for you.

Smith. What, diſpraiſe our trade?

Cob. Nay, neighbour, be not angrie, for Ile ſtand to nothing onlie but this.

Smith. But what? beare witneſſe a gives me the But, and I am not willing to ſhoot: Cobler, I will talke with you: nay, my bellowes, my coletrough, and my water ſhall enter armes with you for our trade: O neighbour, I can not beare it, nor I will not beare it.

Mil. Heare you, neighbour, I pray conſwade your ſelf and be not wilful, & let the Cobler deliuer it, you ſhal ſee him mar all,

Smith. At your requeſt I will commit my ſelfe to you,
And lay my ſelfe open to you, lyke an Dyſſer.

Mil. Ile tell him what you ſay: Heare you naighbor, we haue conſulted to let you deliuer the petition, doe it wiſely for the credite of the towne.

Cob. Let me alone, for the Kings Carminger was here,
He ſayes the King will be here anon.

Smith. But heark, by the Mas he comes.

Enter the King, Dunſton, and Perin.

King. How now Perin, who haue we here?

Cob. We the townes men of Goteham,

Hearing your Grace would come this way,
Did thinke it good for you to ſtay,
But hear you,neighbours,bid ſomebody ring the bels,
And we are come to you alone to deliuer our petition.

Kin. What is it Perin,I pray thee reade.

per. Nothing but to haue a license to brew ſtrong Ale thrise a week,and he that comes to Gotebam,and will not ſpende a penie on a pot of Ale,if he be a byte,that he may faſt.

Kin. Well ſirs,we grant your petition.

Cob. We humblie thanke your royall Maieſty.

King. Come Dunſton, let's away. Exeunt omnes.

Enter Ethenwald alone.

Eth. Ethenwald,be aduiſed, the King hath ſent to thee,
May,more, he means to come and viſite thee,
But why, I there's the queſtion:
Why tis for this,to ſee if he can fynd,
A front whereon to graft a paire of hornes:
But in plain tearms,he comes to Cuckold me,
And for he means to doe it without ſuſpect,
He ſends me word he means to viſite me:
The King is amorous,and my wyfe is kinde,
So kind(I feare)that ſhe will quickly yeeld
To any motion that the king ſhal make:
Eſpecially if the motion be of loue:
For Pliny writes,women are made lyke waxe,
Apt to receiue any impreſſion:
Whoſe mindes are lyke the Ianampſt,
That eates,yet cries,and neuer is ſatisfied:
Well,be as it is,for Ile be ſure of this,
It ſhall be no wates prejudice to me:
For I will ſet a ſkreene before the fyre,
And ſo preuent what otherwyſe would enſue:
Twere good I queſtioned with my father firſt,
To heare how he affected towards the King.
What ho.

Enter Oſrick and Alfrida.

Oſr. Ethenwald,my ſonne,what newes?

Ethen. Why alke you? I am ſure you haue heard the newes.
Oſr. Not yet, I promyſe you my Lord. (viſit you.
Ethen. Why then tis thus, the King doth meane to come and
Oſr. And welcome ſhal his Maieſty be to me,
That in the wane of my decreaſing yeares,
Vouchſafes this honour to Earle Oſricks houſe.
Ethen. So then, you meane to entertaine him well?
Oſr. What els my Sonne?
Eth. May, as you will, but heare you wyfe, what do you think in this, that Edgar means to come and be your gueſt?
Alfr. I thinke my Lord he ſhall be welcom then,
And I hope that you will entertaine him ſo:
That he may know how Oſrick honours him:
And I will be attyred in cloth of Bis,
Veſte with Orient pearle, fetcht from rich Indian
And all my chamber ſhall be richly,
With Aras hanging, fetcht from Alexandria,
Then will I haue rich Counterpoints and muſke,
Calamon, and Caſia, ſweet ſmelling Amber Greece,
That he may ſay, Venus is come from heauen,
And left the Gods to marie Ethenwald.
Eth. Zwouns, they are both agreed to cuckold me,
But heare you wyfe, while I am maſter of the Bark,
I meane to keepe the helmſter in my hand:
My meaning is, you ſhall be ruld by me,
In being diſguiſed till the King be gone,
And thus it ſhall be, for I will haue it ſo.
The King hath neuer ſeene thee I am ſure,
Nor ſhall he ſee thee now, if I can chuſe:
For thou ſhalt be attyrde in ſome baſe weedes,
And Kate the kitchin maid ſhall put on thine:
For being richly tyred, as ſhe ſhall be,
She will ſerue the turne to keep him companie.
Oſr. Why, men that heare of this will make a ſcorne of you.
Eth. And he that lies with this wil make a horne for me.
It is enough, it muſt be ſo.

Alf. He thinks twere better otherwaies. Exit Alfrida
Ethenw. I think not ſo, will you be gone?
Father, let me alone, Ile breake her of her will,
We that are maried to yong wiues, you ſee,
Muſt haue a ſpeciall care vnto their honeſtie:
For ſhould we ſuffer them to haue their will:
They are apt (you know) to fall to any ill.
But here comes the King.

Enter the King, Dunſton, and Perin to Ethenwald.

Ki. Earle Oſricke, you muſt needs hold vs excuſed,
Though boldly thus vnbid we viſite you:
But know the cauſe that mooued vs leaue our Court,
Was to doe honour to Earle Ethenwald:
And ſee his louelie Bride, faire Alfrida.

Oſrick. My gratious Lord, as welcome ſhall you be,
To me, my Daughter, and my ſonne in Law,
As Titus was vnto the Roman Senators,
When he had made a conqueſt on the Goths:
That in requitall of his ſeruice done,
Did offer him the imperiall Diademe:
As they in Titus, we in your Grace ſtill fynd,
The perfect figure of a Princelie mind.

King. Thankes Oſrick, but I thinke I am not welcome,
Becauſe I cannot ſee faire Alfrida:
Oſricke, I will not ſtay, nor eat with thee,
Till I haue ſeene the Earle of Cornwels wife.

Ethen. If it pleaſe your Maieſtie to ſtay with vs,
My wife ſhal wayt as handmaid on your Maieſtie:
And in her dutie ſhew her husbands loue:
And in good tyme, my Lord, ſee where ſhe comes:

Enter the kitchin maid in Alfridas apparel.

Alfrida, you muſt leaue your kitchin tricks,
And vſe no words but princelie Maieſtie.

Maid. Now Jeſus bleſſe your honourable Grace,
Come I pray, ſit down, you are welcome by my troth,
As God ſaue me heres neuer a napkin, fie, fie.

Come

Come on, I pray eat some plums, they be sugar,
Heres good drinke by Ladie, why do you not eate? (eat.
Ki. Nay, pray thee eat Alfrida, it is ynough for me to see thee
Maid. I thank you hartily: by my troth heres neuer a cushen
By my troth Ile knock you anon, go to.
Per. My Lord, this is not Alfrida, this is the kitchin maid.
Kin. Peace Perin, I haue found their subtiltie,
Ethenwald, I pray thee let me see thy kitchin Maid,
Me thinks it is a pretie homely Wench:
I promise thee, Ethenwald, I like her well.
Eth. My Lord, she is a homelie kitchin maid,
And one whose bringing vp hath bene but rude:
And far vnfit for Edgars companie:
But if your Grace want merrie companie,
I will send for Ladies wise and curteous.
To be associates with your Maiestie.
Or if your Grace will haue Musitians sent for,
I will fetch your Grace the best in all this land.
Kin. Ethenwald, no, I will haue the kitchin maid,
And therefore, if you loue me, send for her.
For till she come I cannot be content.
Eth. Father, I wil not fetch her: zwouns, see where she comes

Enter Alfrida in the kitchin maids attyre.

Alfrida. Successful fortune and his hearts content,
Daily attend the person of the King.
And Edgar know that I am Alfrida, daughter to Orick,
And lately made the Earle of Cornwals wyfe.
King. Why, is not this Alfrida?
Alf. No, my good Lord, it is the kitchin maid,
Whom Ethenwald in too much loue to me,
Hath thus attyred to dallie with the King. (and by.
Maid. By my troth (my Lord) she lies, go to, Ile course you by
Kin. Away (base strumpet) get the from my sight.
Mai. Go your waies, you are a cogging knaue I warrant you.
Kin. Base Ethenwald, dissembler that thou art,
So to dissemble with thy Soueraigne,

And afterwards vnder a ſhewe of loue,
Thou camſt to ſooth thy leaſing to the King,
Meaning by that to make me to conceiue,
That thy intent was iuſt and honourable:
But ſee, at laſt thou haſt deceiued thy ſelfe,
And Edgar hath found out thy ſubtiltie,
Which to requite, thinke Edgar is thy enemie,
And vowes to be reuenged for this ill.
Go to thy husband beauteous Alfrida,
For Edgar can ſubdew affects in loue.
Alf. Thanks, gracious King, myrrour of curteſie,
Whoſe vertuous thoughts bewray thy princely mind
And makes thee famous mongſt thy enemies:
For what is he that heares of Edgars name,
And will not yeeld him praiſe as he deſerues.
Nor hath your Grace euer bene praiſed more,
Or tearm'd more iuſt in any action,
Than you ſhall be in conquering your deſires,
And yeelding pardon to Earle Ethenwald.
King. Will you be gone? (Alf. & Eth.
Alf. My gracious Lord, I humbly take my leaue. Exeunt
King. How am I wronged, and yet without redreſſe?
Dunſt. Haue patience good my Lord, and call to mind
How you haue liued praiſed for vertuous gouernment,
You haue ſubdued luſt vnto this day,
And bene reputed wiſe in gouernment,
And will you blemiſh all your honours got,
In being tearmed a foule Adulterer.
Kin. Dunſton, forbeare for I will haue it ſo,
It bootes thee not to counſaile me in this,
For I haue ſworne the death of Ethenwald,
And he ſhall die, or Edgar will not liue.
Dunſton, it is enough, I am reſolued. Exit.
Dun. Nay, if it be ſo, then Ethenwald ſhall not die,
And ſince intreaties can not ſerue the turne:
I will make make preſſe for once what Arte will doe,

Aſmoroth

Aſmoroth aſcende, veni Aſmoroth, Aſmoroth veni,

Eneer the Deuill.

Deuil. What wilt thou?

Dunſton. Tel me what means the King?

Deu. I wil not tell thee.

Dunſt. I charge thee by the eternall liuing God,
That keeps the Prince of darknes bound in chaines,
And by that Sun, that thou wouldſt gladly ſee,
By heauen and earth, and euery liuing thing,
Tel me that which I bid demand of thee.

Deu. Then thus, the king doth mean to murther Ethenwald

Dunſt. But where is the king?

Deu. Seeking for Ethenwald.

Dunſton. But Ile preuent him, follow me inuiſible.

Deu. I wil. Exeunt.

Enter the Prieſt.

Prieſt. I haue bene this morning with a friend of mine,
That would borrow a ſmall ſumme of money of me,
But I haue learned the beſt aſſurance a man can haue,
In ſuch a matter is a good pawn of twiſe the valew,
Or bonds ſufficient for fiue times the quantitie.
He is my neere kinſman, I confeſſe, and a Clergie man,
But fiftie ſhillings is money, & though I think I might truſt him
ſimply with it for a twelue moneth, where hee craues it but for a
moneth, yet ſimply I will not be ſo ſimple:
For I will borrow his gelding to ride to the Terme,
And keep away a iuſt fortnight:
If then he pay me my money, I will deliuer him his horſe,
I wold be loth to loſe my mony, or craue aſſurance of my kinſman,
But this may be done to trie me, & I meane lykewiſe to try him.
This is plain, though truſtie (brethren) ſomthing ſubtill.
But here comes one would faine take my houſe of me.

Neighbor. Sir, I am a poore man, and I wil giue you thirty
ſhillings a yere, if I may haue it you ſhal be ſure of your money.

pr. Truſtie brother in Chriſt, I cannot accord it of the price,
I muſt let my houſe to liue, I aſk no gains, but who comes here?

Enter Honeſtie and a Beggar.

Beg. I beſeech you(good maiſter)for Gods ſake, giue one penie to the poore,lame,and blind,good maiſter giue ſomething.

Prieſt. Fy vpon thee lazy fellow,art thou not aſhamed to beg? Read the bleſſed ſaying of S. Paul,which is,thou ſhalt get thy liuing with the ſweat of thy browes,and he that will not labour is not worthie to eat.

Hone. I,but he remembers not where Chriſt ſaith, hee that giueth a cup of cold water in my name ſhall be bleſſed.

Beg. Alas ſir,you ſee I am old.

prieſt. But that is no reaſon you ſhould beg.

Beg. Alas ſir,age comming on me, and my ſight being gone, I hope ſir, you will pardon mee though I beg, and therefore for Gods ſake one peny,good maſter.

prieſt. Why I tel thee no, for the Spirit doth not moue me thereunto:and in good time,looke in the bleſſed Prouerb of Salomon,which is,good deeds do not iuſtify a man,therfore I count it ſinne to giue thee any thing.

Hone. See how he can turne and wind the Scripture to his owne vſe,but he remembers not where Chriſt ſaith,
He that giueth to the poore lendeth vnto the Lord,
And he ſhal be repaid ſeuen fold:but the Prieſt forgets that, or at leaſt wyſe he will not remember it.

Beg. Now fie vpon thee,is this the purenes of your religion? God will reward you no doubt for your hard dealing.

prieſt. Care not thou for that,wel neighbor, if thou wilt haue my houſe,friend,and brother in Chriſt,it wil coſt you fourtie ſhillings,tis wel worth it truely, prouided this,I may not ſtay for my rent,I might haue a great deale more,but I am loth to exact on my brother.

Hon. And yet he wil ſell all a poore man hath to his ſhirt,for one quarters rent.

Neigh. Gods bleſſing on your heart ſir,you made a godly exhortation on Sunday.

prieſt. I brother,the Spirite did moue me thereunto: Fie vpon vſurie, when a man wil cut his brothers throate for a little

Lucre,

Lucre, fie vpon it, fie, we are borne one to liue by another, and for a man to let his owne as he may line, tis allowed by the word of God, but for vsurie and oppreſſion, fie on it, tis vngodlie, but tell me will you haue it?

Neigh. I will giue you, as I haue proffered you.

Prieſt. Truly I cannot affoord it, I would I could, but I muſt goe to our exerciſe of prayer, & after I muſt goe ſee a Farm that I ſhould haue. Exeunt.

Enter Dunſton and Perin with the King.

Dunſt. MOſt gratious Prince, vouchſafe to heare me ſpeake,
In that the lawe of kindred prickes me on,
And though I ſpeake contrarie to your mind,
Yet doe I build on hope you will pardon me.
Were I as eloquent as Demoſthenes,
Or lyke Iſocrates were giuen to Oratorie:
Your Grace no doubt wil think the time well ſpent,
And I ſhould gaine me commendations:
But for my note is tuned contrary, (uerie.
I muſt intreat your Grace to pardon me, if I do iar in my deli-

King. Why Dunſton, thou haſt found vs gratious ſtill,
Nor will we pull our ſetled loue from thee,
Untill we find thy dealings contrarie:
But if thy parlie be for Ethenwald,
That baſe diſſembler with his ſoueraigne.
Twere better leaue to ſpeake in his excuſe,
Than by excuſing him gaine our ill will:
For I am minded like the Salamander ſtone,
That fir'd with anger, wil not in haſt be quencht:
Though wax be ſoft, & apt to receiue any impreſſion.
Yet will hard mettell take no forme, except you melt the ſame.
So meane mens minds may moue as they think good,
But Kings iuſt doomes are irreuocable.

Dunſt. Tis not ynough, where luſt doth moue the offence.

Kin. Why, Counſellers may not with Kings diſpence.

Dun. A Counſeller may ſpeake if he ſee his prince offend.

King. And for his Counſell rue it in the end.

But Dunſton, leaue, you vrge vs ouer far,
We pardon what is paſt, but ſpeake no more
Dunſt. May pardon me, for I will ſpeak my mind,
Your Grace may call to mind proud Marius fall,
That through his wilfull mind, loſt lyfe and empire,
And Nimrod, that built huge Babylon,
And thought to make a toure to check the cloudes,
Was ſoone diſmaid by vnknowne languages:
For no one knew what any other ſpake,
Which made him to confeſſe, though twere too late,
Yee had made offence in tempting of the Lord.
Remember Dauid, Salomon and the reſt,
Nor had proud Holofernes loſt his head,
Had he not bene a foule Adulterer.
Kin. Dunſton, forbeare, and let this anſwer thee
Thou art too preſumptuous in reproouing me,
For I haue ſworne as trulie as I liue,
That I will neuer pardon Ethenwald.
Dun. Did you but ſee the man, I am aſſurde,
You would not chooſe but pardon Ethenwald.
per. Why Dunſton, you haue ſeene as wel as I,
That Ethenwald hath diſſembled with the King,
My gratious Lord, firſt cut that Traitor downe,
And then will others feare the lyke amyſſe.
Dun. I tell thee perin, were the Earle in place,
Thou wouldſt eat theſe words vttred in his diſgrace.
Veni Aſmoroth, & in good time ſee where he comes.
Here enter Alfrida diſguiſed with the Deuil.
Kin. But tel me Dunſton, is this Alfrida?
Dun. It is my gratious Lord, & this is Ethēwald
That layes his breaſt wide open to your Grace,
If ſo it pleaſe your Grace to pardon him.
King, Yes, Dunſton, I am well content to pardon him,
Ethenwald ſtand vp, and riſe vp Alfrida,
For Edgar now giues pardon to you both. (gee
Dun. Aſmoroth away, My gratious Lord, Dunſton will not for

This

This vnknowne fauour ſhowne Earle Ethenwald,
For which account my Nephew and my ſelf,
Do yeeld both lyfes and goods at your diſpoſe.
King. Thanks Dunſton for thy honorable loue,
And thou deſeru'ſt to be a Counſellour,
For he deſerues not other to commaund,
That hath no power to maiſter his deſire,
For Locrin being the eldeſt ſonne of Brute,
Did dote ſo far vpon an Almaine maid,
And was ſo rauiſht with her pleaſing ſight,
That full ſeuen yeares he kept her vnder earth,
Euen in the lyfe time of faire Guendolin:
Which made the Cornish men to riſe in Armes,
And neuer left till Locrin was ſlaine:
And now though late, at laſt I call to minde,
What wretched ends fell to Adulterers.
Dun. And if your Grace cal Abrams tale to mind,
When that Egyptian Pharo craued his wife,
You will no doubt forgiue my Nephewes guilt,
Who by the mery ieſt he ſhewed your Grace,
Did ſaue your Honour and her chaſtitie.
King. We take it ſo, and for amends
Ethenwald, giue me thy hande and we are friends,
And loue thy wyfe and liue together long,
For Edgar hath forgot all former wrong.
Eth. Thanks gratious King, and here vpon my knee,
I reſt to be diſpoſed as you pleaſe:
Kin. Ynough Ethenwald, but who comes here.

Enter Honeſty.

Hon. Why, I think I haue taken in hand an endles taſke,
To ſmell a Knaue, tis more than a Dog can doe:
I haue diſguiſed my ſelf of purpoſe to finde
A couple of Knaues, which are yet behind,
The next Knaue is a Prieſt, calde Iohn the preciſe,
That with counterfeit holineſſe blinds the peoples eyes,

This is one of them that wil ſay it is a ſhame,
For men to ſwear and blaſpheme Gods holie name:
Yet if a make a good Sermon but once in a yeare,
A will be fourtie tymes in a Tauerne making good cheere,
Yet in the Church he will read with ſuch ſobrietie,
That you would thinke him verie preciſe, and of great honeſty.

Kin. What Honeſty, haſt thou diſpatcht and found theſe priuie knaues? (Exit.

Hon. I ſhal doe anon, I haue them in ſent, but I wil be gone.

Enter prieſt. (exerciſe,

pr. Good Lord, I praiſe God I am come from our mornings
Where I haue profited my ſelfe, and eſſied my brethren,
In ſhewing the way to ſaluation by my doctrine:
And now I am going to the Court to preſer my petition,
I would giue a hundred pound it were graunted:
Tis a thing of nothing, but here comes one of the Court,

Enter Honeſtie.

God ſaue you, brother in Chriſt, are you towards the King.

Honeſt. I mary am I, what then, why doeſt thou aſke?

prieſt. Nothing ſir, but I would deſire you to ſtand my friend
To get me the Kings hand and ſeale to this letter:
I would not vſe it (ſir) to hinder any man for a thouſand pound:
For indeed I am a Cleargie man by my profeſſion:
Tis nothing ſir, but as you ſee, to haue the Kings ſeale,
To carie Tin, Lead, Wool and broad Clothes beyond ſeas,
For you know (ſir) euery man wil mak the moſt he can of his own
And for my part, I vſe it but for a preſent neceſſitie.
If you will vndertake to doe it, Ile giue you a hundred pound.

Honeſty. I thanke you ſir, but I am afraide the King will
hardlie grant it: why, tis an vndoing to the common wealth,
But trulie I will mooue the King to hang you Prieſt yfaith.

May it pleaſe you Grace to grant me my petition,
For I offer it your Grace in pure deuotion.

King. O monſtrous: Dunſton, didſt thou euer heare the like,
Now fie vpon thee baſe villaine, lay hands on him. (King,

Hon. Oh me: nay, on him: Prieſt, I gaue your petition to the

And

And I will ſpeake to him you may be but hanged,
For if you ſhould liue till the King granted your petition,
The verie Rauens would picke out thine eies liuing:
And therefore twere better you were hanged to ſaue the birds a (labour.
King. Now Honeſty, haſt thou done, is here all?
Honeſty. O no, my Lord, for there are ſo many behind,
That I am affeaide my worke will neuer haue an end:
But I ſee by the Prieſts lookes, he lackes company,
Stay a while, my Lord, Ile fetch another preſently.
Kin. Fie, Graceleſſe man, haſt thou no feare of God,
To withold thee from theſe lawleſſe motions,
Why, thou ſhouldſt be as Meſſenger of God,
And hate deceit and wicked auarice:
But thou art one of thoſe whome God doth hate,
And thy vilde deedes will witneſſe gainſt thy ſoule:
And make the moſt abominable in his ſight,
That made thee (wretch) but to a better end,
Then thus to wrong his ſacred Deitie.
Now fie vpon thee monſter of a man,
That for to gaine thy ſelfe a priuate gaine,
Wouldſt ſeeke the vndooing of a common wealth.
And though thou bid ten thouſand torments here
They cannot quit thee where thou ſhalt appeare.
Honeſt. A Prize, though it be long, I haue found him at laſt,
But I could not bring him with me,
And therefore I pind a paper on his ſhoulder,
Meaning thereby to marke him for the gallous:
But hush, here he comes.

Enter Perin.

King. What Perin? I cannot think that Perin will be falſe to (me
Hon. Why no, for he is falſe to himſelf, look in his pocket & ſee,
This is but a falſe writ that he hath vſed,
Vnknowne to your Maieſtie, and leuied great ſummes of money,
And bribed vpon your poore Commons extreamlie,
How ſay you my Lord, is this true or no?
King. Honeſty, thou ſayeſt true, why, impious wretch,

Ingratefull wretch that thou art to iniure him that alwaies held
Beleeue me Dunſton, I durſt wel haue ſworn, (thee deere,
That Perin had not hatcht ſo baſe a thought,
Hon. I, but your Grace ſee(s) you are deceiued.
But will your Grace grant me one boone?
King. Whats that Honeſty?
Hon. That I may haue the puniſhing of them,
Whom I haue ſo laboured to fynde.
King. With all my hart Honeſty, vſe them as thou wilt.
Hon. I thank your Grace: go fetch the other two:
Now to you Cutbert Cutpurſe the Conicatcher,
Thy iudgment is to ſtand at the Market croſſe,
And haue thy curſed tongue pind to thy breaſt,
And there to ſtand for men to wonder at:
Til Dwles and night-Rauens picke out thy curſed eies.
Conicatch. Good Honeſtie be more mercifull.
Hon. You know my mind: O Walter that wold haue more,
And you ſhall haue iudgement I meane, which is,
To be caried into a corne field, and ther haue your legs and hands
cut off, becauſe you loued corn ſo wel, and there reſt til the crowes
pick out thine eies. (thereunto,
But now to you that wil do nothing except the ſpirit moue you
You ſhall for abuſing the bleſſed word of God,
And mocking the diuine order of Miniſtery,
Whereby you haue led the ignorant into errours,
You (I ſay) as you were ſhamleſſe in your ſhamefull dealing,
Shal to your ſhame, & the vtter ſhame of al bad minded men,
That liue as thou haſt done,
Stand in Finsburie fields, neere London,
And there (as a diſſembling Hypocrit) be ſhot to death.
prieſt. Good Honeſty, be more fauourable than ſo.
Hon. Trulie no, the ſpirit doth not moue me therunto,
But who is next, what Perin, a Courtier, and a Coloner too,
I haue a iudgment yet in ſtore for thee,
And for becauſe I will vſe thee fauourablie,
Plaith thy iudgment is to be but hanged,

But

But where'euen at Tyborne in a good two-peny halter,
And though you could neuer abide the ſeas, (ſheet,
Yet now againſt your wil, you muſt bear your ſaile, namely your
And in a cart be towde vp Holburne hill,
Would all men liuing lyke theſe in this land,
Might be iudged ſo at Honeſties hand.
Kin. Well Honeſtie come follow vs to Court,
Wheee thou ſhalt be rewarded for thy paine. (lucres ſake
Hon. I thank your Grace: you that wil damne your ſelues for
And make no conſcience to deceiue the poore:
You that be enemies of the common wealth:
To ſend corne ouer to inrich the enemie:
And you that doe abuſe the word of God,
And ſend ouer woolle and Tin, broad cloath and lead,
And you that counterfeyt Kings priuie ſeales,
And thereby rob the willing minded Communaltie,
I warne you all that vſe ſuch ſubtill villanie,
Beware leaſt you lyke theſe be found by Honeſtie,
Take heed I ſay, for if I catch you once,
Your bodies ſhall be meat for Crowes,
And the Deuill ſhall haue your bones,
And thus though long at laſt we make an end,
Deſiring you to pardon whats amiſſe,
And way the worke, though it be groſſy pend,
Laugh at the faults, and weigh it as it is,
And Honeſtie wil pray vpon his knee,
God cut them off that wrong the Prince or Commmnaltie,
And may her dayes of bleſſe neuer haue end,
Vpon whoſe lyfe ſo many lyues depend. Finis.

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